

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
modulating the transparency of an image of an object as a function of an angle of incidence of a vector normal to a viewing surface at the surface of the object.

5 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the function comprises a cosine function.

Sub A1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the function comprises a linear function.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the function comprises a non-linear function.

10 5. A system comprising:
a display; and
an image of an object projected on the display, where the transparency of the image is modulated as a function of an angle of incidence of a vector, normal to a viewing surface, with the surface of the object.

Sub A2 6. The system of claim 5, wherein the modulating function comprises a cosine function.

15 7. The system of claim 5, wherein the modulating function comprises a linear function.

8. The system of claim 5, wherein the modulating function comprises a non-linear function.

9. A system for controlling the transparency of an image of an object, the system comprising:
a display;
a processor capable of driving the display with an image; and
5 a graphics engine capable of running on the processor, generating the image, and modulating the transparency of the image as a cosine function of an angle of incidence of a vector normal to a viewing surface at the surface of the object.

10. A computer comprising:
a processor;
10 a computer-readable medium; and
a computer program capable of being executed from the computer-readable medium by the processor and modulating the transparency of an image as a function of an angle of incidence of a vector normal to a viewing surface at a surface of an object.

11. The computer of claim 10, wherein the computer-readable medium comprises a memory.

12. The computer of claim 10, wherein the modulating function comprises a cosine function.

13. The computer of claim 10, wherein the modulating function comprises a linear function.

14. The computer of claim 10, wherein the modulating function comprises a non-linear function.

15. The computer of claim 10, wherein the computer-readable medium comprises a storage device.

R 16. A method for generating a transparency factor for an image of an object, the method comprising.

selecting a viewing surface;

5 determining an angle of incidence created by a vector normal to the viewing surface and the object surface; and

calculating the transparency factor from the angle of incidence.

Sub
A4 17. The method of claim 16, wherein calculating the transparency factor from the angle of incidence comprises the step of:

calculating a cosine of the angle of incidence.

10 18. The method of claim 16, wherein calculating the transparency factor from the angle of incidence comprises the step of:

calculating a linear function of the angle of incidence.

15 19. The method of claim 16, wherein calculating the transparency factor from the angle of incidence comprises the step of:

calculating a non-linear function of the angle of incidence.

A 20. A method comprising:

selecting a mode, the mode is FRONT_ONLY, BOTH_SIDES, or BACK_ONLY;

20 determining a viewing angle;

determining an object angle;

calculating a theta, theta equals the viewing angle minus the object angle plus pi;

assigning a function of theta to alpha, if the mode is FRONT_ONLY or

BOTH_SIDES;

25 assigning a function of theta minus pi to alpha, if the mode is BACK_ONLY;

comparing alpha to zero;

assigning zero to alpha, if the mode is FRONT_ONLY and alpha is less than zero;
assigning zero to alpha, if the mode is BACK_ONLY, and alpha less than zero;
assigning minus alpha to alpha, if the mode is BOTH_SIDES, and alpha is less
than zero; and

5 assigning a transparency factor to alpha.

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